

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. An introducer assembly, comprising:
5 an elongate tubular inner sheath formed of a retractable material;
an inner core removably positioned within the inner sheath; and
an elongate tubular outer sheath, wherein the inner sheath having the inner core
disposed therein is removably positioned within the outer sheath.

10 2. The introducer assembly of claim 1, further including a releasing
mechanism for removably attaching a distal portion of the inner sheath to a distal
portion of the inner core.

3. The introducer assembly of claim 2, wherein the releasing mechanism
15 includes a cord having a proximal portion disposed within the outer sheath and a distal
portion configured to removably attach the inner sheath to the inner core.

4. The introducer assembly of claim 3, wherein the cord is at least partially
disposed within a lumen of the inner core.

5. The introducer assembly of claim 4, wherein the inner core is formed with a distal tip having a distally descending conical tapered surface.

6. The introducer assembly of claim 5, further including a guidewire
5 disposed within the lumen of the inner core.

7. The introducer assembly of claim 1, wherein the inner diameter of the outer sheath is smaller than the outer diameter of the inner sheath.

10 8. The introducer assembly of claim 7, wherein the outer sheath maintains the inner sheath in a folded state.

9. The introducer assembly of claim 1, wherein the outer sheath is formed from a flexible material.

10. The introducer assembly of claim 9, wherein the outer sheath is formed
15 from a material that resists kinking.

11. The sheath assembly of claim 1, wherein the sheath assembly has a profile of about twenty French.

12. An assembly for positioning a medical device within a body passage,
comprising:

inner core means for receiving a guidewire;

inner sheath means for receiving a medical device, the inner sheath means being
5 formed from a retractable material and being removably disposed over the inner core
means; and

outer sheath means for maintaining the inner sheath means disposed about the
inner core means.

13. The assembly of claim 12, further including means for removably
10 securing a distal portion of the inner sheath means to a distal portion of the inner core
means.

14. The assembly of claim 13, further including means for attaching the
means for removably securing to the inner core means.

15. An introducer, comprising:

a first sheath formed from a retractable material and configured to introduce a medical device into a vasculature of a patient;

a core member having a proximal section and a distal section and configured
5 with a longitudinal lumen extending from the proximal section to the distal section, the core member being disposed within the first sheath;

a second sheath having a proximal section and a distal section and being formed from a flexible material, wherein the first sheath and the core member are disposed within the second sheath; and

10 a ripcord having a proximal section and a distal section and being configured to removably attach the first sheath to the core member.

16. The introducer of claim 15, wherein the proximal section of the ripcord is disposed between the first sheath and the second sheath, and wherein the distal section of the ripcord is wound about the distal section of the first sheath.

15 17. The introducer of claim 15, wherein the proximal section of the ripcord is disposed within the lumen of the core member, and wherein the distal section of the ripcord is tied to the distal section of the first sheath.

18. The introducer of claim 15, further comprising a guidewire disposed with the lumen of the core member, wherein the proximal section of the first sheath is configured with a handle adapted to receive the guidewire, wherein the lumen of the core member is adapted to receive the guidewire, and wherein the distal section of the
5 core member is tapered.

19. A method for introducing a medical instrument into a vasculature, comprising:

providing an introducer assembly having

(a) inner core means for receiving a guidewire,

10 (b) inner sheath means for receiving a medical instrument, the inner sheath means being formed from a retractable material and being removably disposed over the inner core means,

(c) means for removably securing a distal portion of the inner sheath means to a distal portion of the inner core means, and

15 (d) outer sheath means for maintaining the inner sheath means disposed about the inner core means;

inserting a guidewire into a vasculature of a patient;

threading the introducer assembly over the guidewire and into the vasculature;

withdrawing the outer sheath means from the vasculature;

releasing the distal portion of the inner sheath means from the distal portion of the inner core means;

withdrawing the means for removably attaching from the vasculature;

withdrawing the inner core means from the vasculature;

5 inserting a medical instrument into the inner sheath means;

advancing the medical instrument within the inner sheath means and into the vasculature; and

retracting the inner sheath means from the vasculature.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein providing an introducer assembly
10 includes securing the means for removably attaching to the inner core means, and releasing the distal portion of the inner sheath means includes moving the distal portion of the inner core means relative to the distal portion of the inner sheath means.